

As long as it takes. They gave their lives and died.

Yesterday, a lot of us received military briefings from FEMA, the military, and Homeland Security. I wanted to know whether FEMA and the military are prepared to take people off the island, as we normally do in emergency situations. We did it in Houston, in Jacksonville, and New Orleans.

No, the Governor has not asked for help in evacuating people, they told me.

I asked: How many bridges, even temporary ones, have been constructed in Puerto Rico to replace those destroyed by the hurricane to allow for the transportation of supplies and the evacuation of people?

They said: None, Congressman. Zero. We have not erected any bridges. Again, because the Governor of Puerto Rico hasn't asked us to.

When I was there, I flew over the town of Maricao in the mountains, well known for coffee. There are six ways in and out of the town, and five of those bridges are gone.

Three weeks after D-day in 1944, the allies liberated the deepwater port of Cherbourg, one of the most important objectives in France. It took 20 days and we built bridges and communication lines along the way.

We made better progress in the 3 weeks after D-day than we are making on Puerto Rico. And in Puerto Rico, to the best of my knowledge, there are no Germans shooting at us.

Now, when I asked the officials about evacuating people from the island, they had no real answer. But if I remember correctly, FEMA and the military come to us to fund their budget every year. They are accountable to this Congress.

We are accountable to our constituents. Constituents are coming to me, as they did in St. Maarten, and are saying: Help us get our families out of danger's way.

Mr. Speaker, when will we be able to give these constituents an answer as to why their family members and loved ones aren't being allowed to leave the island and evacuated from danger?

This weekend, Members of Congress are going to Puerto Rico. I spoke with a few of them and said: Hey, at night, you should go to this place where it is really bad.

One stopped me, cut me off, and said: Congressman, we are not staying overnight.

So, on an island where 95 percent of the power is out, our Members of Congress are only going to see things during the day, not during the pitch-black darkness, which is what Puerto Ricans are living with every single night for the last 3 weeks.

Regardless of what my colleagues see during the day or what the President tweets in the morning, my friends stand in line for hours for food, if they can find it; my constituents are worried about their family members; and 5 million Puerto Ricans in the diaspora

have run out of patience. We want our people free to live in the United States of America wherever they can.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents want the government to help get their families out of danger's way.

HONORING THE MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF STUART EPPERSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize North Carolina Fifth District constituent, Mr. Stuart Epperson, whose work has positively affected so many in North Carolina and so many across this great Nation.

Stuart, or "Stu," as his friends know him, is living proof that not only is the American Dream possible, it is achievable if you are simply willing to work hard for it. Stu's story is a model one for all.

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Growing up on a small tobacco farm in Virginia, Stu learned hard work and perseverance. In the 1980s, Stu and his brother-in-law started the Salem Media Group to minister to and report positive news to families across the country.

Under his leadership, Salem Media Group and Salem Radio now host 120 radio stations, 67 of which are in the top 25 markets, and operate 2,400 affiliates.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when many Americans opt to turn off the news due to the negative content, Mr. Epperson's audience is tuning in to be inspired and to be informed.

The content put forth by the Salem Media Group serves as a beacon of hope to the many families seeking positive and instructive stories.

Mr. Speaker, when I consider the body of Mr. Epperson's work, I am reminded of the parable of the faithful servant in Luke 12:48. The Good Book tells us that: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required. . . ."

The Lord has certainly gifted Mr. Epperson with some amazing abilities, and in return, Mr. Epperson has used these talents to give back to multiple community activities.

Among those activities are the Winston-Salem Rescue Mission, Salem Pregnancy Care Center, One Kid at a Time mentoring program, and the Christian Association of Youth Mentoring, which he founded.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Stu would agree that the adage "behind every good man is a good woman" is a true one for him. Stu married the love of his life, Nancy Etsinger Epperson, 54 years ago. This lovely couple has 4 children and 21 grandchildren.

I commend Stu Epperson not only for his many accomplishments but also for

his dedication to ensuring that radio remains family-friendly and value-focused. In recognition of Stu's life and work, I am pleased to announce that soon Stu will be receiving the highly coveted Vision and Leadership Award from the Family Research Council. This award is justly deserved by such an accomplished man, and I add my salute to him.

I know that the community in Winston-Salem, this Nation, and the wider world have benefitted from Stu Epperson's many efforts to make the world a better place. I commend Mr. Epperson on his many accomplishments and his service to our Nation.

STRUGGLES IN PUERTO RICO AND THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BROWN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, it is hard to tell where and in what direction Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are heading today. There is not enough food, millions are struggling to live without drinking water and electricity, and only 8 percent of the roads are open to traffic.

Containers with supplies, medical supplies, and food and other commodities are sitting in containers on the docks in the Port of San Juan and are not moving towards the people and the communities that need them the most. Struggles in the Virgin Islands are less heard about but no less real.

The question is whether we, as a nation, are doing all we can for the citizens of this Nation. Let's compare. After an earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, where the infrastructure was severely damaged, the U.S. military mobilized as if we were going to war.

The very next morning, after the earthquake hit, an Army unit was airborne. Within 2 weeks, 33 ships and 22,000 soldiers had arrived, and more than 300 helicopters were delivering millions of pounds of food and water, not just to the port, but the people of Haiti.

By contrast, today, there are fewer than 14,000 military personnel assisting in relief efforts in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and there are only 88 helicopters and only 4 naval ships, one of them the USNS Comfort that are aiding 3.5 million Americans—3.4 million Americans in Puerto Rico, 100,000 Americans in the Virgin Islands.

In Haiti, Mr. Speaker, we airlifted 15,000 U.S. citizens in 2010 after the earthquake, but in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, we are unwilling to evacuate a single American, even those who have relatives and friends in the many communities across the 50 States of this great country.

As Americans are starving and Americans are desperate, our response needs to be more vigorous.

Now, let's be sure, the military is doing what we are asking them to do. This is not a criticism of the military

not doing what we are asking them to do, but the White House is not asking the military to do enough.

Mr. Speaker, the President must lead on this issue. We have got dedicated members of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard who are willing, ready, and able to be in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to deliver the relief to our neighbors and our citizens.

We need to ask the Department of Defense to send more engineers, more transportation companies, and expeditionary sustainment battalions.

Yesterday, I asked a senior military leader: How many pontoon bridges have been erected in Puerto Rico to cross those washed out roads? Zero. How many miles of power transmission lines have been reestablished to get electricity out to more communities? The answer is zero.

We have military engineers on the ground, but they have not been asked to do that. We need to direct our military to provide the direct services on the local or, in military parlance, on the tactical level. I am not talking about long-term rebuilding of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands by the United States military. I am talking about directing the Department of Defense to establish the minimum infrastructure necessary to do the job that we should be asking them to do, which is to provide relief to 3.5 million Americans in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Strategic movements are good, military assessments and evaluations help, but what is needed is no less than what was done 7 years ago in Haiti.

Mr. Speaker, the President must lead on this issue, and the President must ask our military to do more.

NATIONAL FARMERS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, today is National Farmers Day. From farm to fork, our farmers work hard to put food on dinner tables across this country and around the world.

Today has traditionally been a day to recognize farmers and thank them for all their endless hard work. Records of National Farmers Day events date back to the 1800s.

Mr. Speaker, our farmers are the cornerstone of our rural communities. They face tough odds by the very nature of the business, and food security is national security.

Right now, there is a critical shortfall of skilled young and beginning farmers and ranchers. That is why, together with Congressman JOE COURTNEY from Connecticut and Congressman JOHN FASO from New York, we introduced the Young Farmer Success Act.

This legislation provides incentives for those who would like to pursue a

future in the agriculture industry by adding farmers to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, which currently offers loan payback assistance for professions such as government service, teaching, and nursing.

Under the program, eligible public service professionals who make 10 years of income-driven student loan payments can have the balance of their loans forgiven.

On Monday, I heard from a number of young farmers in upstate New York in Congressman FASO's district. The House Agriculture Committee hosted a farm bill listening session at SUNY Cobleskill, and we covered topics from dairy to specialty crops to nutrition assistance programs, and we heard a lot of excellent feedback from those who shared their stories with us.

As the House Agriculture Committee works to craft the next farm bill, these listening sessions have allowed us to hear firsthand from those who are directly impacted by the farm bill. They provide us with real world examples of what is working and what isn't working.

With farmers in every region of this country, we heard from many different perspectives. This feedback will help us write the best farm bill possible.

Mr. Speaker, food security is national security, and it aids the long-term sustainability of our country. They provide fresh produce and products to communities throughout the country, and there is no better food than something grown locally.

Today, we celebrate our food producers on National Farmers Day, but we should also celebrate them every day for putting food on our tables and in our grocery stores. Let's face it, farming is a tough business. Long hours, unpredictable commodity prices, and, even more, unpredictable weather conditions, but it is also exciting, rewarding, and full of opportunities.

Generations of farmers have worked every patch of American soil caring for the Earth, their animals, and their neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, as vice chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, I want to wholeheartedly thank America's farmers for providing our country with safe, sustainable, healthy, and nutritious food every day. Happy Farmers Day.

AMENDMENT TO THE WAR POWERS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, well, last weekend I was shocked to read the statements of the Republican chair of the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, Senator CORKER. He said that, "Trump has put us on the path to World War III."

This makes it essential that Congress assert its full powers under the Constitution of the United States.

In reaction to Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia and the aftermath, Congress passed something called the War Powers Act. Unfortunately, there was a dispute between the two bodies, and, ultimately, the Senate prevailed and watered down the bill.

Instead of saying, "Before the President engages our troops in hostilities, that he or she must come to the Congress," instead, the bill ultimately adopted saying, "48 hours after the President has engaged our troops in hostilities, he or she must report to the Congress and then seek subsequent authorization, or the troops would be withdrawn after 60 days."

I have introduced legislation in this and preceding Congresses to fix that. That clearly does not represent the constitutional powers of the United States Congress. The Constitution is absolutely clear. Only Congress has the authority to declare war. Once war is declared, the President, under the Constitution, is the Commander in Chief and would act with one voice to conduct the war and coordinate military efforts.

So my bill would say—do away with the allowance of 48 hours and say: Before engaging U.S. troops and military in hostilities, that the President must first come to the Congress and seek a declaration of war. I think it is absolutely essential that this Congress act on this legislation and make it clear to the President of the United States that he does not have the authority to wake up one morning and tweet of an attack against another country and engage these people in an escalation that may end, as Senator CORKER says, in World War III.

This is a very dangerous time for our country. It is time for this separate and equal branch of the government to assert its full authority to rein in any and all dangerous activities by this President.

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FRANKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANKS of Arizona. Mr. Speaker, the First Amendment of our Constitution gives us this precious freedom of speech that we so cherish in America. Contrary to heated debate and public opinion, we, in the United States, rarely face the kind of persecution that necessitated this great protection. So I rise today to shed light on the abridgement of freedom of speech that is often widely discussed, but that few Americans ever have to endure.

Across the world, Mr. Speaker, individual freedom of speech is frequently infringed. A posted critique or just sharing one's views freely on the internet can be punishable, even by death.

Late one evening in September, a well-known Indian journalist, Gauri Lankesh, was murdered outside her